

on the unlearned poets of the older school
who were
content to go on pigging in their native
Gallic barbarism,
instead of enriching French literature with
the plunder of
Greece and Rome. In part the young rebels
succeeded.

They drove the pedants off the field. From
the ancients
they were able to capture a good deal. But
many of them
were themselves to perish staggering under
the weight of
their classical acquisitions, grown pedants
in their turn;
while others of them, including Ronsard
himself, were
only to prevail by compromise—by throwing
away most
of their erudite baggage and returning to
that gay and
charming French simplicity they had mocked
at in Marot.
Sooner or later the genius of France always
comes back
to see that the subtly simple—the secret of
French great-
ness as of Greek—outweighs all the
ponderous complexities
ties that take in the Teutonic mind.

The dangers of becoming overloaded with
classical
lumber showed themselves clearly enough
the very next
year in the first volume of Ronsard. The
French Pindar
of these pompously elaborate *Odes* of 1550 is
never Pindar
and often is not French. But the value of
war-cries like
that of the young 'Brigade' seldom
depends on their
truth. They rally rather than teach. It is not
information,
but inspiration, that they have to give. To
head a charge
a red rag serves just as well as silk. Second
thoughts follow
in time to secure the ground that has been
won. By 1553

Ronsard was reconciled with MelHn de Saint-Gelais, the leader of the older school. Henceforth his happiest writing was to strike a mean between the old French tradition and the new learning.

But that wise compromise was helped by lessons learnt from brighter eyes and voices more musical than are found in libraries. Already about 1545, in attendance on the Court where he still kept the post of ecuyer, he had